

2002 Arizona Youth Survey Report

Prepared by The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

Research on risk and protective factors has important implications for prevention efforts. The premise of this approach is that in order to promote positive youth development and prevent problem behaviors, it is necessary to address those factors that predict the problem. By measuring risk and protective factors in a population, specific risk factors that are elevated and widespread can be identified and targeted by preventive interventions that also promote related protective factors. For example, if academic failure is identified as an elevated risk factor in a community, then mentoring and tutoring interventions can be provided that will improve academic performance, and also increase opportunities and rewards for classroom participation.

Risk- and protective-factor focused drug abuse prevention is based on the work of J. David Hawkins, Ph.D., Richard F. Catalano, Ph.D.; and a team of researchers at the University of Washington in Seattle. Beginning in the early 1980's the group researched adolescent problem behaviors and identified risk factors for adolescent drug abuse and delinquency. Not surprisingly, they found that an interrelationship exists between adolescent drug abuse, delinquency, school dropout, teen pregnancy, and violence and were able to identify risk factors for these problems.

YOUTH AT RISK	SUBSTANCE ABUSE	DELINQUENCY	TEEN PREGNANCY	SCHOOL DROP-OUT	VIOLENCE
Community					
Availability of Drugs and Firearms	✓				✓
Community Laws and Norms Favorable Toward Drug Use	✓				
Transitions and Mobility	✓	✓		✓	
Low Neighborhood Attachment and Community Disorganization	✓	✓			✓
Extreme Economic and Social Deprivation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family					
Family History of High Risk Behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Family Management Problems	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family Conflict	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parental Attitudes and Involvement	✓	✓			✓
School					
Early and Persistent Antisocial Behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Academic Failure in Elementary School	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lack of Commitment to School	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Individual/Peer					
Alienation and Rebelliousness	✓	✓		✓	
Friends Who Engage in a Problem Behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Favorable Attitudes Toward the Problem Behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

County Improvement Using Survey Data

Why the Arizona Youth Survey?

Data from the Arizona Youth Survey can be used to help community planners assess current conditions and prioritize areas of greatest need.

Each risk and protective factor can be linked to specific types of interventions that have been shown to be effective in either reducing risk(s) or enhancing protection(s). The steps outlined here will help your community make key decisions regarding allocation of resources, how and when to address specific needs, and which strategies are most effective and known to produce results.

What are the numbers telling you?

Review the charts and data tables presented in this report. Using the table below, note your findings as you discuss the following questions.

- Which 3-5 risk factors appear to be higher than you would want?
- Which 3-5 protective factors appear to be lower than you would want?
- Which levels of 30-day drug use are increasing and/or unacceptably high?
 - ❑ Which substances are your students using the most?
 - ❑ At which grades do you see unacceptable usage levels?
- Which levels of antisocial behaviors are increasing and/or unacceptably high?
 - ❑ Which behaviors are your students exhibiting the most?
 - ❑ At which grades do you see unacceptable behavior levels?

How to decide if a rate is “unacceptable.”

- Look across the charts – which items stand out as either much higher or much lower than the others?
- Compare your data with statewide, and national data – differences of 5% between local and other data are probably significant.
- Determine the standards and values held within your community – For example: Is it acceptable in your community for 75% of high school students to drink alcohol regularly even when the statewide percentage is 90?

Use these data for planning.

- Substance use and antisocial behavior data – raise awareness about the problems and promote dialogue
- Risk and protective factor data – identify exactly where the community needs to take action
- Promising approaches – talk with resources listed on the last page of this report for ideas about programs that have proven effective in addressing the risk factors that are high in your community, and improving the protective factors that are low

MEASURE

Risk Factors
Protective Factors
Substance Use
Antisocial Behaviors

Unacceptable
Rate #1

Unacceptable
Rate #2

Unacceptable
Rate #3

Unacceptable
Rate #4